

Sleeping Bear Dunes

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sleeping Bear Dunes
National Lakeshore
Empire, Michigan



Winter Activities

www.nps.gov/slbe

Nature transforms Sleeping Bear Dunes from season to season, and winter provides the opportunity to experience this wonderful landscape with fresh eyes. The trails, scenic views and popular destinations are all still here, just embellished with a new look. The days are shorter, the pace is slower and crowds are never an issue during the winter months. Yet, activities are abundant and the Lakeshore remains a wonderful place to explore.

The **Philip A. Hart Visitor Center** in Empire is a great place to start your visit and to find out more about the park's features and facilities. Rangers provide information and Park Entrance Passes and brochures are available. Accessible parking is provided to the exhibits, auditorium, and bookstore, and a captioned multimedia presentation introduces visitors to the park. Facilities including restrooms, water fountain, and telephone are all accessible, and an assistive listening system is available. The Visitor Center is open seven days a week, year-round, and winter hours are 8:30-4:00. It is located on M- 72 just east of the intersection with M-22.

Please exercise caution! The lakeshore offers fascinating winter activities, but freezing temperatures, as well as slippery and unstable surfaces, create hazards. Ice formations along the Lake Michigan shoreline may be tempting to explore but are dangerous. Avalanche is a possibility on steep, snow-covered dunes.

- **Snowshoeing** is permitted on all snow-covered dunes, fields, and forests in the Lakeshore, although it is recommended that you stay on well-marked pathways. If you are snowshoeing along a cross-country ski trail, please stay off to the side of the skiers' tracks.
- **Guided Snowshoe Hikes** with a ranger are offered on Saturdays and during the winter holidays. Hikes will start at the Philip A. Hart Visitor Center at 1:00 pm. Bring your own snowshoes or try out those available for use on the hikes. Rangers will first provide basic snowshoeing instructions and then everyone will drive to the trailhead. During the snowshoe hike, rangers will share interesting facts about the park's unique features. Dress in layers and plan to be outside until about 3:00 pm, then return borrowed snowshoes to the Visitor Center. Not only is snowshoeing easy, fun, and good exercise, it is also an activity that can be enjoyed by all ages. The ranger-led hikes are mildly strenuous, yet they proceed at a leisurely pace for approximately one and a half miles. This allows visitors an opportunity to look for signs of wildlife or evidence of ancient glaciers or to simply experience a winter wonderland. The National Lakeshore has a limited supply of snowshoes and will provide them free of charge. Participants need only purchase the park entrance pass to join in the fun. Space is limited, so please call **231-326-5134**, extension 328 for more details and to make reservations.
- **Cross Country Skiing** opportunities are plentiful as popular hiking trails turn into snow-covered paths. Designated trails for cross country skiing include Old Indian, Platte Plains, Windy Moraine, Alligator Hill, Bay View, and Good Harbor Bay. Maps are available at the Visitor Center in Empire and at the trailheads. Please note that these trails are not groomed, and for safety purposes it is always recommended that you ski with another person.
- **Pets** are not allowed on designated ski trails from December 1 through March 31. Pets are allowed on Empire Bluff, Shauger Hill/Scenic Drive, Pyramid Point, and Duneside Accessible Trails throughout the year.
- **Sledding** is permitted at the Dune Climb in the designated area when it is covered with snow only. Sleds, toboggans, saucer sleds, inflatable tubes or similar equipment as well as downhill skis and ski boards are prohibited at all other locations in the park.
- **Camping** is permitted at Platte River Campground. Snowshoe and ski access is also available to the White Pine backcountry campsites.
- **Ice fishing** in compliance with State of Michigan regulations is permitted.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Trail Information

Trail	Total Distance	Hiking Trail Description	Special Use	Designated X-Country Ski Trail	Leashed Pets Allowed ?
1. Old Indian Trail	3.7 Miles Two loops 6.0 Km	Easy. Woods. View of Lake Michigan.	Hiking Trail	Yes Easy Advanced	No Pets December 1 thru March 31
2. Platte Plains Trail	15.6 Miles Three loops 24.9 Km	Easy Longer hikes. Near small lakes. Fairly flat, woods, low dunes.	Hiking Trail	Yes - Easy Intermediate Advanced	No Pets December 1 thru March 31
3. Empire Bluff Trail	1.5 Miles Round trip 2.4 Km	Moderate. Short hike up hill to Lake Michigan overlook.	Hiking Trail Snowshoe Hang Gliding Model Aircraft	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
4. Windy Moraine Trail	1.5 Miles 2.4 Km	Moderate. Hilly, views of Glen Lake and surrounding hills.	Hiking Trail	Yes Advanced	No Pets December 1 thru March 31
5. Shauger Hill Trail	2.4 Miles 3.9 Km	Moderate. Hilly, woods.	Hiking Trail	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
6. Cottonwood Trail	1.4 Miles 2.4 Km	Moderate. Some hills, some loose sand, scenic overlook.	Hiking Trail Snowshoe	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
7. The Dunes Trail	3.5 Miles Round trip 5.6 Km	Extremely strenuous. Long difficult hike in loose sand to Lake Michigan. Very hilly, no shade, no water.	Hiking Trail Winter Sledding only on the Dune Climb	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
8. Duneside Accessible Trail	0.9 Miles Round trip 1.5 Km	Accessible to visual, hearing, mobility impaired. Hard packed surface, benches. Flat, wooded, pond. Nature information.	Walking Trail Wheelchairs Strollers Many Benches Snowshoe	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
9. Sleeping Bear Point Trail	2.8 Miles 4.5 Km	Strenuous. Hilly, loose sand to Lake Michigan View and Access.	Hiking Trail Snowshoe	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
10. Alligator Hill Trail	9.0 Miles Three loops 14.0 Km	Strenuous. Uphill, woods. Lake Michigan & Glen Lake overlooks.	Hiking Trail Bridle Trail	Yes – Easy Intermediate Advanced	No Pets December 1 thru March 31
11. Bay View Trail	8 Miles Three loops 13.0 Km	Moderate. Hilly, woods, fields, Lake Michigan views.	Hiking Trail	Yes – Easy Intermediate Advanced	No Pets December 1 thru March 31
12. Pyramid Point Trail	2.7 Miles Round Trip 4.3 Km	Moderate. Hilly, woods. Overlooks Manitou Islands.	Hiking Trail Snowshoe Hang Gliding Model Aircraft	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
13. Good Harbor Bay Trail	2.9 Miles 4.5 Km	Easy. Flat, woods, wet in places. Near Lake Michigan.	Hiking Trail Snowshoe	Yes Easy	No Pets December 1 thru March 31

Park Pass required for all uses of park lands and waters. The Scenic Drive is closed to vehicle traffic in the winter to allow cross country skiing; parking is at Shauger Hill trailhead. Bikes and wheeled vehicles must remain on maintained roadways and are not allowed on trails. Pets are permitted on trails on 6' held leash, except on designated ski trails December 1 through March 31.